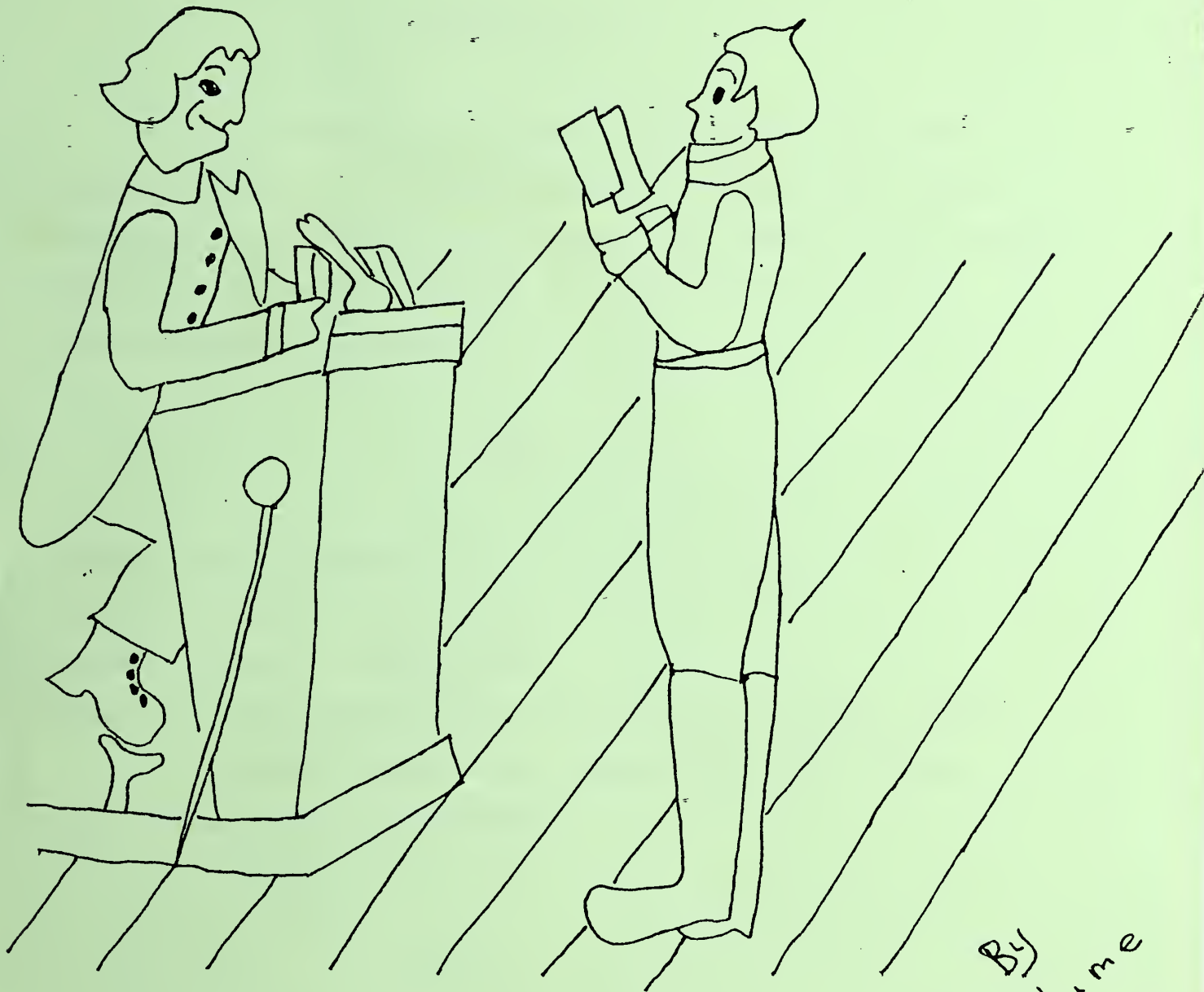


Burr Oak School Days

1853 — 1953



Drawn By
Ardell Blume
Dick Haney

\$	3.00
+	20 Tax
	<hr/>
	\$3.20

Dedication

To all of the men, women, boys and girls who have
attended Burr Oak School

Acknowledgment

We wish to thank all of those who helped to make this
history possible. We especially want to thank Oscar Felch,
Mrs. Frank Felch, Collie Felch Waugh, Mrs. Skinner, Mrs. Camp,
Ervin P. Quast, Fred Gravenish and many others for their
information and interest

Staff

Editor - Gene Converse

Assistant Editor - Arleen Blume

Business Manager - Ardell Blume

Reporters - Dick Hancy, Norma Teats, Phillip Baldwin, Jurene
Hogan, George Morse, Karen Sukow, David Edison

Staff Advisor - Mrs. Wilma Nobbs

The Organization of School District 23

Samuel Little and wife, Amanda, on May 8, 1867, deeded the following property to District 23. Obadiah Smith and Edwin French were witnesses to the transaction.

Beginning at the S.W. quarter stake of the N.W. quarter of Section 7, 102, 17, running 10 rods north on section line - East 8 rods - South 10 rods - West 8 rods to the point of beginning. $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of land.

Filed May 27, 1867 at 2 P.M.

School Buildings in District 23

In 1857, District 23 included District 40, which is the school just north and east of us on the highway. The first school was taught by Jane Reeves in a board shanty on Section 6, owned by Henry Fero. The term commenced in the last of May 1867. In the fall of that year, a log schoolhouse was erected for educational purposes in the township. Martha Slocum was the teacher. In 1867 the district was divided. The southern part retained the old number and a temporary building was erected in the southwest corner of the northwest quarter of Section 7. Amanda Strcaver taught the first term in this building. In 1868 a school house was erected on this same site. Rebecca Otis taught first in this building.

In 1893 Obadiah Smith built the present school on the same site. For his work he received \$200.00 and the old building. He traded the old building for a team of horses. This building is used as a granary on the Blume farm. According to this information, our present building is sixty years old.

Phillip Baldwin, Reporter

Burr Oak School 1895

The following pupils were enrolled in Burr Oak School in 1895

Pupils between 5 - 8

Louis French
Oscar Felch
Edward Watt

Pupils between 8 - 16

Idina French
Walter French
Callie Felch
George Felch

Pupils between 16 - 21

Frank Felch
Bertha French

Burr Oak School 1896

The following pupils were enrolled in Burr Oak School in 1896

Shirley French
George Felch
Oscar Felch
Idina French
Walter French
Lewis French
Eddie Watt
Mable Watt

Teacher - Cora Dell

Average cost per pupil - \$3.0125

The monthly salary for winter and spring was \$26.50

Burr Oak School 1898

Attendance for 1898

George Felch
Oscar Felch
Walter French
Lewis French
Mabel Watt
George Rice
Shirley French
Russell McBride

The teacher for the fall term was Mabel French

The teacher for the winter term was Emily Thompson

Dick Haney, Grade 6

Teacher and Salary

1.	1895	Araminta Weseman					
2.	1896-1897	Cora Bell	4 terms	\$25.00	per month	Fall Terms	
				28.00	" "	Winter	"
				30.00	" "	Spring	"
3.	1898	Mabel French	1 "	28.00	" "	Fall	"
		Emily Thompson	1 "	23.00	" "	Spring	"
4.	1899	Edith Carter	2 "	37.50	" "	Winter &	"
						Spring	"
5.	1900	Lulu Enright	3 "	25.00	" "	All	"
6.	1901	Martha Hillier	1 "	25.00	" "	Winter	"
7.	1902	Alice Meany	1 "	25.00	" "	Winter	"
8.	1903	Emellie Hart	2 "	40.00	" "	Fall	"
				60.00	" "	Spring	"
9.	1904	Edith Carter	1 "	35.00	" "	Fall	"
		Bertha Kind	1 "	30.00	" "	Spring	"
10.	1905	Libby Stillwell	All "	28.00	" "	Fall	"
				30.00	" "	Winter &	"
						Spring	"
11.	1906	Minnie Paulson	1 "	35.00	" "	Winter	"
		Kathryn Gahagan	1 "	30.00	" "	Spring	"
12.	1907	Nellie Flonerger	2 "	30.00	" "	Winter &	"
						Spring	"
13.	1908	Emma Jensen	2 "	30.00	" "	"	"
14.	1909	Rose Ames	1 "	35.00	" "	Winter	"
15.	1910	Catherine Baker	3 "	30.00	" "	All	"
16.	1911	Hazel Wilder	3 "	40.00	" "	"	"
17.	1912	Myrtle Carter	All "	40.00	" "	"	"
18.	1913	Mrs. Emma Phillips	" "	42.50	" "	"	"
19.	1914	Grace Martin	" "	42.50	" "	"	"
20.	1915	Margaret Roberts	" "	45.00	" "	"	"
21.	1916-17	Dulcie Hogan	" "	45.00	" "	"	"
22.	1918-19	Fern Adler	" "	45.00	" "	"	"
23.	1920	Ethel Milbrad	" "	65.00	" "	"	"
24.	1921-22	Mrs. Burt Dibble	" "	90.00	" "	"	"

A Visit with Mrs. Skinner

by Arleen Blume

Mrs. Skinner was superintendent of Mower County from 1890 to 1900. She visited the schools twice a year. It was difficult visiting 129 districts twice a year, but she only missed four districts in her ten years as superintendent.

In the winter she visited the schools with horse and cutter, and in summer she visited with a horse and buggy. She remembers of visiting in District 23 very well.

An unusual case in a district happened when a man teacher, without a teaching certificate, began to teach anyway. An unusual case in another district happened when a mother wouldn't send her children to school. There was a compulsory education law then, so an attorney had to come out and settle it.

One of the funny incidents that she remembers was the morning she went to visit a school and saw the teacher sitting on the steps crying. She went to see what was the matter. The children had locked her out of the schoolhouse.

One of the good things that she remembers was visiting the schools when she had to drive out on Monday mornings and stay all week visiting different schools. At night she had to stay at different houses. The people were always nice to her, and let her stay whenever she wanted to.

Mrs. Skinner had made a trip to Europe some years ago and brought back all kinds of interesting things from there. One was a mummy's hand. Just the other day, a gray-haired old man came up to her on the street, and said he remembered when she used to visit the schools showing all the things she got from Europe. He was a pupil in one of the schools she visited.

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The teacher's wages were then \$25.00 to \$35.00 per month. Mrs. Skinner, as Superintendent, received \$100.00 a month. There were twelve men teachers then. Mrs. Skinner's office was in the second story of the Court House. There were 129 districts and 2 joint districts. The qualifications a teacher needed to be able to teach in a rural school were to take an examination and have a third grade certificate. There were also first grade and second grade certificates.

The pupils had to do the same as they do now. They had to graduate from the eighth grade.

A Visit with Oscar Felch by Arleen Blume and Norma Teats

Oscar Felch was born in Marshall Township nine miles from here. He went one term in the old schoolhouse.

The inside of the school was all covered with wood and had four windows with blinds on. They had no storm windows. The boys had to hang their coats and caps on nails. Desks and seats were made of rough boards. One water pail and one box of chalk had to last for three years. They got their water from the Blume farm in a tin pail. They had a dipper in it, and each child took turns drinking out of the dipper.

In bad weather the parents had to take their children to school with horses and a sled. When the children did something wrong in school, they had to stay in, and sometimes they were beaten with a ruler. In nice weather they played all kinds of games. When there was a lot of snow they had snowball fights at recess.

Some of Mr. Felch's schoolmates were the following: Ed Gahagan, who now lives on Lincoln Street, George Rice, who lives

seven miles out of Austin on a farm, George Felch, his brother, Bertha French, who now lives in Minneapolis, the Watt children, the Hilliers, the Perkins, and Callie Wall, who lives in Austin.

Oscar Felch married Eva Loomis in 1920. They lived in District 23 for sixty seven years, living on the same farm all the time. Mr. and Mrs. Felch had no children. Mr. Felch is the oldest settler here in this district.

The children had five readers in those days, and when they got through the fifth reader they would be through school.

At that time, one of the hardships was the bad weather. When it was storming and the roads were bad, they had to travel with horse and buggy. Sometimes the roads were so bad the buggy would tip over. Then, they had to unhitch the horses, tie them to the buggy, and try to get it back on the road again. It took them a long while to get to town, and it was sometimes a week before they got back home again. That is why they didn't go to town very often, and then only when they had to.

Some of the pleasantest things that Mr. Felch remembers of those days happened on Sunday when all the neighbors went sleigh riding. The men had races with their horses and sleighs, and then they would just ride and talk together. On Sunday night they went over to the neighbors. Usually the women would sit and sew, talking over their problems, and the men would sit and talk about their farms and their troubles. Then later, they would gather around the fire and sing a few songs. The women would fix a lunch, and then they would go home.

The teachers which Mr. Felch remembers the best were Amy Varco, who was always good to them, Louis Enright, who was a good teacher and still could manage the children well, Edith Carter, who teaches in town now, and Martha Hiller, who was also a good teacher.

Austin H. Felch, Mr. Felch's father, was on the school board for a short while. Byron French and John A. Thompson were on the school board before Mr. Felch went to school. Other school board members were John French, Sylvester Thompson, John Durst, Frank Felch, Jake Budger, Joe Helebrandt and Oscar Felch.

Some of the old settlers were A. J. French, Byron French, Obadiah Smith, Mr. Gahagan and John Rice.

Mr. Felch remembers a few of the funny episodes of those days. When Oscar Felch was five years old he visited school. All the boys hung their hats on nails then. He went to hang his hat up, but the teacher said, "I'll take the hat." He thought she was going to take his hat away from him. He jumped out of the window and ran to the neighboring farm where his mother was. Byron French lived there at the time.

If there was any water left in the pail at the end of school, they sometimes forgot to empty it. The water would freeze over night and break the pail. They either borrowed one or went without water the next day.

They had their maps in a steel box hanging on the wall. There were maps of the United States, North America, South America and all the oceans. They were rather torn at the bottom. All the children who didn't like geography tore big pieces off the maps every time they walked by. Finally, there were no maps left.

Mr. Felch remembers that Obadiah Smith, who built the present school, did not have a roof on his house at one time. When it snowed, it would fall right on his bed and sometimes cover him. Then he strung sheets across his bedroom. When they were full of snow, he would get up, shake them out, and put them back up again.

There were good teachers and some bad teachers then. One teacher, instead of having classes, would rather spend the whole day scolding and beating the children. Another one licked them with a buggy whip when she got angry. Another teacher would just walk up to the children and slap them or box their ears as she passed.

A Visit with Mrs. Felch
by Arleen Blume

Clara Fischer Felch was born in Austin Township in 1879. She went to Minnereka School in Lyle Township. The school was a frame building planned like this school but had no coal bin. Walter Rand gave the school that name. It had a pot-bellied stove with coal for fuel. There were no seats. They had boards for desks and benches to sit on. Their maps were in a case which pulled down like a window shade. The school was blown down by a cyclone when Mrs. Felch was eighteen. Then they built the school which is still in Lyle now.

They played "Rescue" and "London Bridge" at recess. They had spelling bees, basket socials, sewing, cards and puzzles to put together.

At Christmas time they had a bough of an oak tree for a Christmas tree with popcorn and cranberries for decorations.

After school there was no recreation of any kind unless the neighbor's children called. Then they played hide and go seek or played house in the cornerib.

Clara Fischer was married to Mr. Frank Felch in 1905. After they were married, they came to District 23 in 1905 and lived on a farm. They had it for forty eight years, and it is still the Felch farm. They had two children, Florence Felch Peterson and Francis Felch Morse. The children attended school here. Francis is the

mother of George Morse, who is now attending school here. Mr. Felch was on the school board for twenty five years. Mr. Felch passed away on March 9, 1944.

One of the hardships was trying to get to town. In the spring when the roads were muddy they used to get stuck with a horse and buggy. The wheels got covered with mud, and they had to get out and push and get all muddy. In the winter the snow got very deep and they didn't get to town very often.

Some of the pleasantest things that she remembers of those days are the Fourth of July Celebrations, County Fairs, and the Grange meetings.

Memories of District 23

I was the first mother who attended the Mother's Club. A meeting was called to organize, and I was the only one to show up. I was rather glad, as I was on my way to my Grandma Perkin's bedside, and she passed away a few days later - thirty three years ago. My Grandmother, or the Perkin's family, settled seventy six years ago on what you now all know as Gravenishes farm. In fact, the silver maple planted on the school grounds on Arbor Day almost sixty years ago, was sent by Mrs. Perkins by her two grandchildren, Mabel and Edward Watt, who lived with her and attended the school. Going still further back, we talked to one of the pupils that attended the school when she was a little girl. She was Ada Storey, now Mrs. Roy Dibble. She says, on account of wolves and going thru the woods, she was carried on the backs of older pupils or the Gahagan boys, especially Jack. She still lives in Austin, and is about eighty five years or older. She lived where Joe Lamping lived. All the Perkins family attended the school, and eight of our family went to school there.

Mrs. John Walsh, 606 W. Bridge St. Austin, Mn.

at night they would hear the howl of wolves and look out the window to see them silhouetted against the night sky.

Making a home warm at that time was another problem, which they solved, somewhat, by putting clean straw under the hand-woven carpets, and tar papering and banking the foundation. Cook stoves, heaters and hard coal burners provided warmth, but even at that, there were many nights when the cold was really felt, despite all efforts.

Mr. Lamping served several terms on the school board with John French and Bert Manchester. One of the outstanding teachers at that time, who remains in the memory of the children, was Miss Grace Martin, who is still a resident of Austin.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Lamping were active in the district and gave freely of their services whenever called upon.

Mrs. C. F. Granholm
605 Harmon Avenue
Austin, Minnesota

Three Generations Attend Same School

On March 10, 1886 my great grandparents, Austin H. Felch and Susan Annette Powers Felch, came to the farm where my great uncle, Oscar Felch, now lives. They brought with them their four children. One of them was my grandfather, Frank E. Felch, who was nine years old at that time. He, his sister and two brothers were born in Marshall township.

Grandfather went to school in the first school house in District 23. In 1893 the present building was built.

In 1905 my Grandfather and Grandmother were married. They built the house we now live in. They planted the evergreens, apple and plum trees.

Grand father and Grandfat or Felch had two children, my Aunt, Florence Felch Peterson and my mother, Frances Felch Morse. They both attended school in District 23. My cousin, Nancy Peterson, went to school here for a while too. We are the third generation of our family to go to the same school.

George Felch Morse, Grade 3

Memories of School Days in District 23

District 23 was the only school I ever attended. My parents, brother, Frank, sister, Callie, and brother, Oscar, lived where Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Felch are living today. We all attended school some of the same years. We had one and one quarter miles to walk. We had some cold, stormy winters, and the roads would drift badly. Father used to take us to school with a team and sleigh, and we had a hard time getting through the deep drifts.

I can remember the picture of "Sitting Bull" was carved on the south side of the wood shed.

I can recall of catching rides on the sleighs of farmers driving by and throwing snowballs at some of the drivers. There were really good horses in those days.

I can also recall several of my teachers. I think Minnie Cameron was the first teacher in about 1890. Then, there were Effie Goodman, Olive Savage, Sadie Hitchfield, Amy Varco, Lulu Easter, Cora Bell, Lulu Enright, Emily Thompson and Mabel French. Gertrude Ellis, now Mrs. John Skinner, was superintendent.

Those were the days of rattle snakes. I can recall when Olive Savage was teaching us. The school kids ran across a rattlesnake northeast of the school house. Mr. Savage came along with a wagon

and team. Olive ran out to the road, and he came in and killed it. I also remember that some men, who were working on the road, killed one on the roadside south west of the school house.

I'd like to say that District 23 was a great help to young people, and I surely speak well of this school and the teachers.

George W. Felch
Shevlin, Minnesota

Interviewing the Jordans
by Norma Teats

Pat Jordan and his wife, Lauretta, lived on the farm that was the Obediah Smith place. Mr. Jordan and his wife live in Austin now.

Lauretta Joyce Jordan taught school at Sargeant for eleven years. She taught twenty children and was paid from \$20.00 to \$30.00 per month. One of the texts used then was the "Robertson Arithmetic". All the other books were "Appleton". Later the books were the "White Series".

When Mrs. Jordan punished the children, she tweaked their ears or hair to make them behave. She didn't have to do this often. One child would come to school with gum in his mouth. He would pass it around and let everyone chew it. This made the teacher very angry.

They had no hand washing facilities. No one washed his hands, unless badly needed. Then, they had to wipe their hands on trouser legs or skirts, because they had no paper towels. In fact, at first they had no paper at all. They only had black boards and slates.

The school terms were only two months in the summer and three months in the winter.

Mrs. Jordan also taught in South Dakota. The children were

out of school when they were through the fifth reader and the second arithmetic book. They didn't go by grades, but by the books completed.

Pat Jordan was born in Freeborn County. He went to school at Newry in a country school.

Pat and Lauretta Jordan were married in 1919. They lived on their farm for fifty one years, until it was sold in 1951.

Visting Mrs. G. W. Camp

Gene Converse and Dick Haney called at the home of Mrs. G. W. Camp on February 24, 1953, at 4:30 P.M.

Mrs. Camp was born in Rock Island County, Illinois, in 1870. She was married in Illinois to G. W. Camp. Five children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Camp. In 1914 they moved to what is now District 23. Mr. Camp passed away in 1937.

During Mrs. Camp's school days she enjoyed such things as ball games, sociables, slate games and others.

She also told us the condition of the road, or shall we say trail, which was passable by horse and buggy. These roads wrecked the buggies oftentime.

Some of her most pleasant times were her associations with her neighbors and with the Parent-Teacher's Club, which she helped start.

Some of you know Mr. Morgan, our mailman, before he passed away. He was Mrs. Camp's son-in-law.

Mrs. Camp had two children that went to school in this district.

Reporters - Gene Converse
Dick Haney

New Members of Our Community

We moved here in October of 1950. There wasn't any electricity here for a long while, so it seemed odd to be using flat irons and old fashioned lamps in this day and age. After much bickering and waiting, we finally got electricity in this part in August of 1952.

We have two sons, one of whom graduated from Austin Central High School. He is in the service now, and the other one is attending the University of Minnesota.

Mrs. E. Herrick

The Blumes

They moved here March 1, 1951, from LeRoy, Minnesota. They live on the Joe Halcbrandt farm.

With them are three children, Arleen, Ardell and Rosemarie. Their parents are Bill and Helen Blume. They are engaged in dairy farming.

The Riemanns

Croline Virginia Paradise was married to Harold LeRoy Riemann in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on October 27, 1945. We have two children, Patricia Marie and Michael Harold.

We moved to Austin in October 1948. This is Mr. Riemann's "home town". We rented homes until we bought two acres of land in Windom Township, and built our own home on this land. We completed building and moved into our home in March 1951. We like to think we "carved our home out of the wilderness", because our land was covered with a dense growth of brush and trees, and we had to clear it, before we could begin building.

Mr. Riemann, who served four and one half years in the United States Army, works as a plumber in Austin.

The Growth of Burrwood Addition

There are twenty lots in Burrwood Addition. Charles Heald bought this tract from Smith Quick, who was then owner of the Blume farm. Lew Edison subdivided them into lots, 132 feet wide and 660 feet long.

My sister named this addition. She called it Burrwood. There are now seventeen lots sold in Burrwood Addition. Most of the lots have houses on them.

Here are some of the people that live in Burrwood:

1. Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Lovelin came in 1951. The house they are now living in was built by Mr. Lovelin two years ago.

2. Mr. and Mrs. Gunderson came in 1949. The house they are now living in was built three years ago by Mr. Gunderson and his father.

3. Mr. and Mrs. Edison came in 1948. The house they are now living in was built five years ago by Mr. Edison.

4. Mr. and Mrs. Smock came the first of October of 1952. They bought the house, which was originally built by Ervin Haney.

5. Mr. and Mrs. Otto Sukow came in November of 1948.

6. Mr. and Mrs. Marland Sukow came in December 1948. They lived in their garage until their new house was finished in 1953.

7. Mr. and Mrs. Norman Aucra Jr. came in August 1949. They built their new home, which they are now living in.

8. Mr. and Mrs. Schaefer came in 1949.

9. Mr. and Mrs. Wessels came in 1949. The house they are now living in was built by Mr. Wessels.

10. Mr. and Mrs. Clark came in 1952. The house they are now living in was built by Mr. Clark.

11. Mr. and Mrs. Haney came in 1949. When they first came, they lived in a garage. They first built the house which Mr. and Mrs. Smock are now living in. They built the home Mr. and Mrs. Delaney are now living in. After that, Mr. Haney built their present home.

12. Mr. and Mrs. Converse came in 1952. The house they are living in was built by Mr. Converse a year ago.

13. Mr. and Mrs. Burnett came in 1952. The home they are living in is new and was built by Mr. Burnett.

Reporters - Karen Sukow
David Edison

Visiting John Everill

Mr. Everill was born in Dane County, Wisconsin. He was married to Mrs. Everill in Iowa. Mr. and Mrs. Everill had no children. They moved to District 23 in 1920. They bought their farm from Frank Hayzik and have lived there thirty three years. Mr. Everill was elected to the school board and served ten years. Mr. Fred Gravenish, Mr. Walter Elward, Mr. Frank Felch and Mr. Joe Holcbrandt served also.

Reporter - Norma Tents

The Epleys

Earl and Margaret Epley moved to this district in March of 1944. They live on a one hundred sixty acre farm. The Epleys have six children, three boys and three girls. Their names are Richard, Darlene, Roger, James, Mary JoAnn and Jane Marie. Mr. Epley is a member of the school board.

Reported - Dick Haney

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PH.D. THESIS

BY

JOHN H. COOPER

IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1955

The Praizlers

In 1917 Mary and Joseph Praizler bought the John Duerst farm west of the Burr Oak School which was the family home until the fall of 1952. On this farm they reared their two children, Georgena and Robert.

Georgena studied to become an elementary grade teacher, and Robert graduated from the University of Minnesota as a chemical engineer. At present, Georgena, Mrs. A. N. Bliton, lives in Austin, and Robert resides in Chicago, Illinois.

The late Joseph Praizler, who died July 12, 1952, was preceded in death by his wife, October 12, 1934.

They loved their family and farm-home and gave their best to them. Their perseverance, will-power and ambition helped them to achieve their modest and honorable standards of life. Each one served as members of the school board of District 23 for many years. One incident that remained in their memories was the damage caused by vandals who entered the school in the summer of 1928. Ira Syck apprehended the youths and recovered most of the water-soaked books and supplies from a wooded hide-out.

A Letter from a Former Student

Dear Gene,

I received your surprise letter inquiring of the past. I attended the same school you are now attending. That was my first grade there. Martha Hillier, who now teaches in Austin, was my first teacher. I lived on a farm about one mile south-east of the Oasis, on which the Elwards now live.

In those days there were no buses to pick us up. I had to walk from that farm, northeast through the woods, to the little white school house. Oscar Felch, Gertrude Watt and Walter French are the only students I remember now. There were no roads. It was just a trail, and they were not graveled.

The Watt girls lived East of the school, in the first house on the same side of the road. The place then belonged to Bert Perkins. The Frenches lived south of the school, the first place down the road.

Yours sincerely,

George Rice

Memories of a Former Teacher

I have been asked to reminisce just a little, hoping that I might recall incidents of the two years, 1920-21-22, spent as a teacher in your school.

I hadn't planned to teach in 1920, but Mrs. Eunice Rice, County Superintendent, met me downtown, and said that she was very much in need of an experienced teacher for District 23. I hesitated, because I had my home and two children to care for; but when I thought it over and found someone so satisfactorily care for the children, I accepted.

I thought it would be just for one year. However, I think that teaching school is a habit, and the next year found me with my little gray pony wending my way into the country again.

The autumn mornings were thrilling. The winter mornings were sometimes quite exciting, when a blizzard raged so that only the pony knew just where we might be going.

It is such a pleasure to remember some of the boys and girls.

Frances Welch, a first grader, just loved to read. She read many books her first year.

I recall one boy who objected to giving any more time to a given lesson. I insisted. He said, "Well, I know it now". I said, "Well, you spend some more time on it, just for the sake of obedience this time. What do you suppose I might have been if I hadn't learned to obey?" He replied, with a twinkle in his eye, "Well, maybe an old maid."

Then I recall taking my five year old son with me to visit the school one day, but only that once, thank you. Little John Walsh came in crying to tell me that my son had called him a pro-German.

Then there was tragedy also. Three children of the district died of black diphtheria, two little daughters of Mr. and Mrs. James Wilson and a little Johnson girl. Two of the little girls had been attending our school. One was a pre-school child.

Oh, yes. Life moves on. Now those boys and girls are men and women, sending children to school.

Mrs. Burt Dibble

Early Teachers

These teachers taught Burr Oak School prior to 1894. No authentic records were kept prior to that time, so we are unable to give the date.

Peter Paul
Maggie Norton
Ninnie Cameron
Almeda Truesdale
Kate Van Camp
Clare Ellis
Maggie Vale
Annie Vale
Hilton Bowers
Effie Goodman
Sadie Litchfield
Olive Savage
Emily Thompson

Pick Haney

Interesting Sidelights

This was taken from the clerk's report of 1894. The average cost per pupil was \$1.86. Today, the average cost per pupil is \$203.06.

In 1894, \$150.00 was voted for special tax.

The silver maples on the grounds were planted by the Watts children over sixty years ago.

In 1928, at the school board meeting, a motion was made to dig a well and fence the yard. This was voted on each year and defeated until 1935. At that time they voted to dig the well but not fence the grounds.

In 1937, the entry was built and swings purchased.

In 1948, the oil burner was bought.

In 1950, electric lights were installed, the exterior shingled, floors refinished and new encyclopedias purchased.

In 1953, a back door was cut to the building. Supply cupboards built, new globe, flag, dictionaries and four desks were purchased.

The Johnsons

Mr. and Mrs. Bennie Johnson moved to Burr Oak on April 1, 1934. They were transferred from Woodson to Burr Oak in the fall of 1934. Emery, Floyd, Harold, Arling, Gloria Daphine and Nolan all went to school in Burr Oak.

Burr Oak School 1900 by Ardell Blume

There were nine pupils enrolled in 1900. The teacher was Clara Loge. The following were pupils:

Shirley French
Lewis French
Walter French
Jessie Hillier
Edward Hillier
May Shaw

Oscar Felch
Tohney Gahagan
Gertrude Watt

It was interesting to note that \$169.69 was the amount spent, and \$175.00 was the amount voted. That year they paid \$132.00 for fuel. Their bond interest was \$3.66. Their other expenses, which included teacher's wages and supplies, were \$71.95. The cash on hand was \$5.95.

Rules for Penmanship 1895

The following was taken from an old register of 1895. These are the rules that were set up by the State Department in 1895.

1. There should be only two classes, one using long, properly sharpened slate pencils and sponges, the other using copy books, pens and ink.

2. The first mentioned class should include all pupils of the first two grades, the other, all pupils of the "Third Reader Grade", and such pupils of the two higher grades as have not acquired sufficient skill in penmanship.

3. With tact the teacher should carry on the instruction of both classes at the same time.

4. Let the constant aim be to attain as speedily as possible, legibility, neatness, and ease and rapidity of movement.

Burr Oak School 1920

Teacher -- Ethel Milbrand

Pupils --

Joseph Zrusky
Ema Johnson
Opal Wilson
Lillian Espe
Annie Johnson
Edna Pitcock
Georgena Praizler
Francis Walsh
Goldie Wilson
Lucella Walsh
Willie Pitcock
Ruby Wilson

Burr Oak School 1930

Teacher -- Mrs. Arthur Johnson

Pupils --

Lillian Svejkovsky
Harold Graff
Mary Walsh
Bobby Praizler
Adolph Svejkovsky
LaVerne Graff
Irene Walsh
Russell Wilmont
Elton Graff
Dorothy Graff
Mildred Iestrud
Roger Svejkovsky
Dorothy Elward

Burr Oak School 1940

Teacher -- Betty Strong

Pupils --

Myron Graff
Milo Hyland
Floyd Johnson
Milford Kulff
Maxine Graff
Harold Johnson
Arling Johnson
Ruth Walker

Mayphene Graff
Gloria Johnson
Donald Johnson
Audrey Kulff
Ruby Walker
Betty Lou Hyland
Marilyn Parr
Lois Jean Spurgeon

Burr Oak School 1953

Teacher -- Wilma Nobbs

Pupils --

Gene Converse
Ardell Blume
Arleen Blume
David Edison
Dick Haney
Phillip Baldwin
Karen Sukow
Norma Teats
Patricia Lovlein
Garrett Baldwin

George Morse
Rosemarie Blume
Marvin Lovlein
Marlene Sukow
Richard Gunderson
Joan Teats
Nancy Wessels
Patricia Rieman
Carole Hogan
Jurne Hogan

Dear Mrs. Nobbs and Students,

Thinking of the history of Burr Oak School in the twenty years we have lived near it, sends many thoughts about in my mind.

A rural school, and most especially our Burr Oak, is a symbol of the neighborhood. It's teacher and students within set the spirit and standard for it's people in homes and farms around it.

All can recall, come Christmas, that the walls of our school can scarcely hold all who wish to gather up and add to their Christmas spirit by witnessing "The Program". This is especially true in recent years, when a portion of the program portrayed the true and simple story so beautifully for all of us. A warm, good feeling welled up in the young and not so young alike.

This is an incident mixed with sentiment that I recall. When Mr. Joseph Helebrandt passed away, many in our district remembered that few had the best interests of our school more at heart than he. The day before his funeral, two students, Arleen Blume and Karen Sukow, a bit breathless and flushed from running to our home from school, held out a moist handful of coins collected by the teacher and students to add to a memorial to one whose generous deeds did not go unnoticed. His son, Dr. S. A. Helebrandt was touched and

pleased upon hearing of this incident.

No history of Burr Oak would be complete I feel, if an orchid were not presented to our teacher of the past several years, Mrs. Wilma Hobbs. Under her guidance, the tone of school was kept on a high plane. Evidence of interesting projects, varying from season to season was found on the bulletin board, in an aquarium, a bird or cocoon collection, et cetera.

Sincerely and gratefully yours,

Mrs. Fred Gravenish

Memories of District 23

My first teacher at Burr Oak was a Miss Helen Baker. This must have been in the fall of 1909. I remember her only as a small lady, to whom I could run for help with my school problems. I recall her telling me that I was a good singer, but telling my older sisters that I sang without making a sound.

My first mistake in class that I remember was to leave one letter out where there should be double letters. Miss Baker always told me, "Now I'm going to let you write it over ten times so you don't forget again." Because she let me write it, it never seemed like punishment. My mother tells me that I cried when she left school at the end of the term. I would like to meet her just to thank her again.

My second grade teacher was a Mrs. Phillips. Now school work got a little harder. I had to write words without a book, and I didn't like it. My dog used to follow me to school. Mrs. Phillips told me to leave him home from now on, and I was plenty mad at her until we got acquainted. Our school was cold that winter again. Mrs. Phillips always let me study near the stove, so we were pals again.

One of the schoolboard members chased us off thin ice the next spring, and he used a whip to prove he meant, "stay off".

I spoke my first piece at Christmas and lived through the stage fright to speak again.

There was never a dull moment at Burr Oak in 1911 with Miss Myrtle Carter as teacher. I now applied honest effort and worked to be neat at all times. I practiced penmanship, put in comas and periods, but I lived through that too. The big boys built a dam in the road ditch and flooded the school grounds in the spring. We had to play inside for a week because of the mud. I still wonder why a school ground is often lower than a road and left that way for years.

We played sand lot baseball every summer. Miss Carter's brother came to visit us that spring, and he was the first left handed hitter we had while I was catcher. Near the end of the term we broke the bat, and that "busted" up the ball games. One boy took this broken bat, and tried to see how close he could come to the other boys bare feet without stabbing them. It couldn't last, and he hit a big boy's foot. Every kid wanted to see him get his nose punched. I happened to be on the school porch, but when I heard the racket I ran to see, because I didn't want to miss anything. When I came around the corner of the school house I ran right into that broken bat. I got the splintered end against the right side of my nose, near the eye. Miss Carter washed it out, but since the eye wasn't hurt we just marked it lucky. I had lots of headaches for the rest of the term.

In 1912, we had a new teacher, Miss Grace Martin. Our school took on a new look. First came the eye test. I found out I had gone blind in my right eye during school vacation. Dad now took me to Dr. J. B. Rogers. He said we were four months too late in coming to

him. The only thing he could do was to fit me with glasses to protect the other eye. Miss Carter took bows, arrows, and play swords away from us to keep us from hurting our playmates. I certainly can't blame her. The kid with the broken bat was just having fun. It is just something that happened. I still lived through it and I still mark it lucky.

Our school building was enlarged. We even had storm windows and a bigger heating furnace, so we were really getting up in the world.

A dental cream salesman brought us samples. One little fellow ate half of his before Miss Martin noticed what he was doing.

The teachers had been furnishing and getting us all the books we needed from the library in Austin, but now we had a few of our own. We got a globe, some large maps, and a water cooler for summer. Hot lunches were started in winter during the two years I had Miss Martin as teacher. I think every child will admit she was tops and a go-getter for us. Miss Martin had trouble with boys using tobacco. She expelled two and whipped one. That stopped all use of tobacco for that year. In the last school program I had to be the comedian, so I took top honors. I wonder if I have forgotten how to make a willow whistle.

I nearly forgot to tell about the day I was hung. We had very little playground equipment, so we made our own. Someone brought a rope, and we put up a swing, mostly for the girls. One day we tried climbing rope. That broke the rope on one side. My kid brother went up the other rope and then pulled the rope up after him. It was my turn next, and he wouldn't throw the rope down. I went up the tree to get the rope and box his ears. He made a loop and tossed it over my head. When I tried to take the loop off I fell out of the tree. The rope wasn't long enough, and my feet didn't touch the

ground. The big boys saw what was happening. They ran over and caught me and untied the rope almost before it pulled tight. I wanted to punch my kid brother, but he ran to Miss Martin for protection. Then she asked a big boy to cut the old rope out and put it in the fuel room before someone did get hung.

I can't help but notice the changes in the school setup over the forty odd years. When we had a Christmas program, Santa Claus held the spotlight, and Jesus wasn't even mentioned in the entire program. These days you can hardly tell the difference between a public school Christmas program and the programs we have in church Sunday School at Christmas. We were taught to read, write and spell the word prayer, but no one thought of teaching us to ask God's Blessing when we sat down to our lunches. Now, however, we know that at least a few teachers are trying to encourage the children to remember their table prayers, even at school lunch rooms and cafeterias. More power to them; or perhaps I should say, "May the Lord bless them all, both teacher and children." I'm not trying to point out or insinuate that our teachers of yesteryears were not pious people. I just want to point out the change of schedule and as to what was expected of our teachers.

Now, just a word to the teachers of today in this little rhyme.

"Thou must be true thyself,
If thou the truth woulds't teach.
Thy soul must overflow,
If thou another soul would reach.
It need the overflow of heart
To give the lips full speech.
Let us pray. Oh, let me teach the truth of life,
In the most effective way.

And let me live the life I teach
In the presence of God each day.
Oh, let me learn as did the twelve,
To teach for Mankind's sake.
Let us pray further for all teachers.
We implore thy blessing
Oh, God, on all of us, the men and women,
Who teach the children of our nation.
Teach us to reverence young lives.
Gird us for our task with patience and tranquillity.
Give us special tenderness for those who need us most.
We give thanks for the Godly teachers we have had.
May the strength and beauty of Christlike service shine
through our lives.
May we constantly train ourselves to be more like the
Great teacher, our Master, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Erwin P. Quast
1000 Foster Street
Austin, Minnesota

